

Message Text

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S E C R E T GENEVA 0122

EXDIS

FROM STERNER MEPC DEL

E.O.11652 GDS

TAGS PFOR

SUBJ SIXTH MILITARY WORKING GROUP MEETING,

MIDDLE EAST PEACE CONFERENCE, GENEVA

SUMMARY. SHORT SIXTH MEETING OF MILITARY WORKING GROUP REPLOUGHED SAME GROUND AND, WITH RELIEF ON PART OF BOTH SIDES AS WELL AS GEN. SIILASVUO, AGREED POSTPONE FURTHER MEETINGS UNTIL JANUARY 15 IN HOPES THAT BY THEN ISRAEL WOULD BE IN POSITION TO MAKE SPECIFIC PROPOSAL. END SUMMARY.

1. SIILASVUO BRIEFED ME AS FOLLOWS. GUR OPENED WITH PREPARED STATEMENT, MAIN POINT OF WHICH WAS TO TRY TO MAKE EGYPTIANS SEE THAT PROCESS OF DECISION MAKING ON THIS ISSUE IN ISRAEL AT MOMENT IS NECESSARILY SLOW AND CIMPLICATED. AFTER YEARS OF CONFLICT, IT WAS ONLY NATURAL THAT GOI WOULD MOVE WITH GREATEST CAUTION ON ISSUE WHICH WAS OF SUCH IMPORTANCE TO ISRAEL. THIS WAS PARTICULARLY TRUE WHEN NEW GOVERNMENT BEING FORMED. GUR SAID HE WAS DISAPPOINTED TO HEAR EGYPTIANS RESURRECT QUESTION OF OCTOBER 22 LINES. THIS RAISED THE QUESTION AS TO WHETHER EGYPTIANS REALLY WANTED A SEPARATION OF FORCES. GUR SAID THAT ISRAEL DOESN'T WANT PRESENCE OF SUPER-POWERS IN THESE NEGOTIATIONS. FROM BEGINNING OF ARAB-
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ISRAEL CONFLICT INTERVENTION OF OUTSIDERS HAD TENDED TO COMPLICATE MATTERS RATHER THAN SIMPLIFY THEM. GUR SAID HE WOULD THINK THAT EGYPTIANS ALSO WOULD SEE PRESENCE OF OUTSIDERS IN THE NEGOTIATIONS AS DEROGATION OF THEIR SOVEREIGNTY. GUR SAID THAT

HE COULD NOT ACCEPT EGYPT'S PROPOSITION THAT ISRAELIS WERE ENGAGING IN DELAYING TACTICS; EGYPTIANS COULD LONG AGO HAVE ACCEPTED ANY ONE OF SEVERAL IDEAS THAT ISRAELIS HAD PUT FORWARD.

2. COLONEL HUWAIDI, IN RESPONSE, SAID THAT IF ISRAEL TOOK POSITION THAT IT REJECTED EGYPT'S FIVE PRINCIPLES, THERE WAS NOTHING LEFT TO TALK ABOUT EXCEPT OCTOBER 22 LINES. IF EGYPT WANTED TO REQUEST EXPERTS FROM THE OUTSIDE TO HELP WITH NEGOTIATIONS, HE DID NOT SEE THAT THIS DETRACTED FROM EGYPTIAN SOVEREIGNTY.

3. GUR SAID ISRAEL HAD REJECTED EGYPT'S FIVE PRINCIPLES ONLY BECAUSE EGYPT HAD NOT ACCEPTED ISRAEL'S TWO PRINCIPLES. HE SAID THAT EITHER ISRAEL'S ORIGINAL OFFICIAL PROPOSAL (BOTH SIDES VACATING THEIR CROSS-CANAL HOLDING AND UNEF TAKING THESE OVER), OR "MODEL NO. 1" WHICH GUR HAD PUT FORWARD IN FOURTH MEETING (GENEVA 57), WOULD HAVE PROVEN GOOD ALTERNATIVES TO OCTOBER 22 PROPOSAL.

4. COLONEL SION SAID EGYPTIANS SEEMED TO MISUNDERSTAND WHAT ISRAELIS MEANT BY "RECIPROCITY" AND "MUTUALITY." THESE TERMS COULD COMPRISE POLITICAL AS WELL AS MILITARY MEASURES. SIILASVUO THEN INTERJECTED THAT IT MIGHT BE GOOD IF BOTH PARTIES COULD COME FORWARD WITH SPECIFIC EXAMPLES OF WHAT THEY MEANT BY "RECIPROCITY."

5. GENERAL MAGDOUB SAID THERE WAS NO FURTHER UTILITY IN DISCUSSION OF CONCEPTS AND THEORIES. THERE WAS NO POINT IN CONTINUING TALK UNTIL ISRAEL CAME FORWARD WITH ITS CONCRETE PROPOSAL. GUR REPLIED THAT HIS GOVERNMENT WAS NOT YET READY TO DO THIS BUT HE AGREED THAT WHEN READY IT WOULD BE A GOOD IDEA FOR BOTH SIDES TO PUT FORWARD PROPOSAL SIMULTANEOUSLY. GUR SAID THESE PROPOSALS SHOULD BE SPECIFIC, WITH PRECISE LINES ON MAPS, FORCE LEVELS, ETC. MAGDOUB SAID CRUCIAL STAGE HAD BEEN REACHED IN THESE TALKS; GENERAL DAYAN HAD INDICATED ISRAELI PROPOSAL WAS COMING SOON. GUR REPLIED HE WOULD NOT WISH WORKING GROUP TO BE GUIDED BY WHAT GENERAL DAYAN SAID PUBLICLY; HE COULD, HOWEVER, SECRET

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SAY OFFICIALLY THAT ISRAEL WAS NOT AT THIS MOMENT READY TO PUT FORWARD PROPOSAL.

6. DISCUSSION ENSURED AS TO WHEN NEXT MEETING SHOULD BE HELD. THERE SEEMED TO BE TACIT ACCEPTANCE OF PROPOSITION THAT THERE WAS NO POINT IN HAVING ANOTHER MEETING JUST TO SPIN THINGS OUT. ISRAELIS SUGGESTED RECESS OF ONE WEEK. MAGDOUB SAID THIS WAS A BIT TOO LONG AND SUGGESTED INSTEAD TUESDAY, JANUARY 15. IT WAS AGREED TO MEET 4P.M. THAT DAY. SIILASVUO, IN CLOSING COMMENT, SAID HE HOPED THAT BOTH SIDES WOULD COME TO MEETING WITH CONCRETE PROPOSALS IN HAND. GUR SAID HE HOPED SO TOO, BUT COULD NOT GUARANTEE IT. IT WAS AGREED THAT MEETING WOULD BE HELD IN ANY EVENT.

7. COMMENT: SIILASVUO COMMENTED THAT ALTHOUGH THERE WERE
CONTENTIOUS MOMENTS, AND EGYPTIANS ARE SHOWING INCREASING SIGNS OF
IMPATIENCE WHEN EITHER GUR OR SION LAUNCH INTO ONE OF THEIR
PHILOSOPHICAL LECTURES, ATMOSPHERE OF THIS SIXTH MEETING ON
WHOLE WAS STILL NOT UNFRIENDLY. I HAD DINNER WITH EGYPTIAN
NEGOTIATING TEAM (PLUS AL-ERIAN) LAST NIGHT. WHILE THEY
COMPLAINED ABOUT ISRAELI DILATORY TACTICS AND EXPRESSED USUAL
EGYPTIAN SKEPTICISM THAT ISRAEL WILL EVER WITHDRAW, I CAME
AWAY WITH IMPRESSION THEY KNOW THINGS ARE HAPPENING BEHIND
THE SCENES AND ARE PREPARED TO BE PATIENT. END COMMENT.
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